

Message Text

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PAGE 01 SINGAP 01536 050201Z

ACTION EA-12

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FM AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9999

IN*O RUMTBK/AMEMBASSY BANGKOK 8465

AMEMBASSY JAKARTA

AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR

AMEMBASSY MANILA

AMEMBASSY CANBERRA

C O N F I D E N T I A L SINGAPORE 1536

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: ECON, ENRG, SN

SUBJ: ENERGY INITIATIVES FOR THE VICE PRESIDENT'S
VISIT TO ASEAN AREA

REF: STATE 82633

1. SUMMARY: SINGAPORE MAY BE INTERESTED IN COOPERATIVE
EFFORTS IN TANKER SAFETY AND OIL SPILL TECHNOLOGY, ENERGY
CONSERVATION, AND SOLAR ENERGY IN THAT ORDER OF
PRIORITIES. GOS HAS HAD TO COPE WITH MAJOR OIL SPILLS
IN PAST THREE YEARS AND WOULD WELCOME ADVANCED TECHNO-
LOGY IN THIS AREA. WHILE NOT YET FOCUSING ON ENERGY
CONSERVATION, GOS COULD PROBABLY BE INTERESTED IN WAYS
OF MAKING INDUSTRIAL POWER USE MORE EFFICIENT AND IN
ENERGY-EFFICIENT ARCHITECTURAL DESIGN. SOLAR ENERGY
USE IS IN ITS INFANCY HERE, BUT CONDITIONS SEEM CON-
DUCIVE FOR SUCH APPLICATIONS AS WATER HEATING NOW AND
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PAGE 02 SINGAP 01536 050201Z

POSSIBLY AIRCONDITIONING IN FUTURE. END SUMMARY.

2. AREAS OF PROBABLE GOS INTEREST. OF FIVE AREAS FOR
COOPERATIVE EFFORTS SUGGESTED PARA TWO REFTTEL, WE
BELIEVE GOS WOULD BE INTERESTED IN THREE AS DISCUSSED
BELOW IN PRIORITY ORDER:

A. TANKER SAFETY AND OIL SPILL TECHNOLOGY.

STRAITS OF MALACCA AND SINGAPORE ARE ONE OF WORLD'S BUSIEST WATERWAYS, CARRYING ENORMOUS TONNAGES OF OIL, MOSTLY FROM MIDDLE EAST TO JAPAN. SINGAPORE IS WORLD'S THIRD LARGEST REFINING CENTER. MAJOR OIL SPILLS IN STRAITS IN 1975 AND 1976 ADDED IMPETUS TOWARD IMCO AGREEMENT LAST NOVEMBER ON TRAFFIC SEPARATION SCHEME FOR STRAITS SHIPPING, WHICH SHOULD WHEN IMPLEMENTED LESSEN CHANCES FOR FURTHER SPILLS. NONE OF LITTORAL COUNTRIES, HOWEVER, HAS ADVANCED TECHNOLOGY OR EQUIPMENT FOR CLEANING UP MAJOR SPILLS. WE BELIEVE GOS AT LEAST WOULD BE INTERESTED IN OBTAINING TECHNOLOGY AND PERHAPS ALSO IN SUPPORTING EFFORTS TOWARD NEW STANDARDS FOR TANKER SAFETY. IT SHOULD BE MENTIONED THAT THERE IS OUTSTANDING OFFER FROM JAPANESE TANKER OWNERS TO CONTRIBUTE 400 MILLION YEN TO REVOLVING FUND TO FINANCE DIRECT COST OF CLEANING UP SPILLAGE IN EVENT OF TANKER ACCIDENT.

B. ENERGY CONSERVATION. SINGAPORE'S PER CAPITA

ENERGY USE IS SECOND IN ASIA ONLY TO JAPAN'S; IT QUADRUPLED IN 15 YEARS TO REACH 1952 KWH IN 1977. GOS HAS WELL-DEVELOPED LONG TERM PLAN TO MEET ENERGY REQUIREMENTS; INSTALLED CAPACITY IS PROJECTED TO INCREASE BY 41 PERCENT TO 1960 MW IN 1987. IN ITS PLANNING, GOS HAS CONSIDERED ALTERNATIVE ENERGY

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PAGE 03 SINGAP 01536 050201Z

SOURCES (IT WILL PROBABLY SWITCH FROM OIL TO COAL AS PRIMARY FUEL FOR SOME FUTURE PLANTS TO OFFSET UNCERTAINTIES IN OIL SUPPLY AND PRICING) AND HAS TRIED TO TAKE POTENTIAL POLLUTION INTO ACCOUNT, BUT IT SEEMS TO HAVE PLACED LITTLE EMPHASIS ON ENERGY CONSERVATION. WE BELIEVE THAT THIS LACK OF ATTENTION MAY BE A "CULTURAL LAG" AND THAT, AS ENERGY CONSUMPTION AND FUEL PRICES INCREASE, SINGAPORE WILL INCREASINGLY TURN TO CONSERVATION. WE WOULD SUGGEST THAT MOST USEFUL FOCUS MIGHT BE IN TWO AREAS: 1) INCREASING EFFICIENCY OF INDUSTRIAL ENERGY USE (ALTHOUGH THIS WOULD BE DELICATE SUBJECT IN INVESTMENT-MINDED SINGAPORE) AND 2) ARCHITECTURAL DESIGN TO MINIMIZE NEED FOR AIRCONDITIONING. GOS CONTINUES MASSIVE LOW-COST HOUSING CONSTRUCTION AND HAS THUS FAR PAID LITTLE ATTENTION TO SUN FOILS. MOST OF LOW-COST HOUSING IS NOT AIR-CONDITIONED, BUT AS STANDARD OF LIVING RISES AND BETTER QUALITY HOUSING IS BUILT, DEMAND FOR AIR-CONDITIONING WILL EVENTUALLY INCREASE. SINGAPORE BUILDERS CONTINUE TO ERECT SUN-SOAKING OFFICE BLOCKS, SHOPPING CENTERS AND HOTELS THAT RELY ON HEAVY AIRCONDITIONING. BETTER DESIGN AND PERHAPS BUILDING CODES COULD LESSEN THIS ENERGY DEMAND. IT

SHOULD BE NOTED THAT GOS HAS BEEN SUCCESSFUL IN HOLDING DOWN VEHICLE ENERGY CONSUMPTION AND AIR POLLUTION ALTHOUGH THIS IS A BY-PRODUCT OF ITS DRACONIAN TAXES ON AUTOMOBILES INTENDED TO RELIEVE TRAFFIC CONGESTION.

C. SOLAR ENERGY. INTEREST IN SOLAR ENERGY IS AT AN EARLY STAGE IN SINGAPORE, THOUGH APPARENTLY INCREASING. IN SOME WAYS CONDITIONS ARE IDEAL FOR SOLAR ENERGY PROGRAMS. GOS HAS AN EXCELLENT RECORD FOR UNCONVENTIONAL MUNICIPAL PROGRAMS SUCH AS PUBLIC HOUSING AND TRAFFIC CONTROL. IF CONVINCED OF PRACTICABILITY OF SOLAR ENERGY APPLICATIONS, IT HAS IMAGINATION AND WILL TO DESIGN AND IMPLEMENT EFFECTIVE PROGRAMS. GOS AGENCIES HAVE PLANS FOR MORE LARGE PUBLIC HOUSING PROJECTS WHICH COULD USE

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 04 SINGAP 01536 050201Z

SOLAR ENERGY, AND THESE AGENCIES ALSO HAVE DEMONSTRATED IMAGINATION AND FLEXIBILITY IN PROJECT AND BUILDING DESIGN. CLIMATIC CONDITIONS ARE REASONABLY FAVORABLE, ALTHOUGH ABOUT 50 PERCENT OF SOLAR ENERGY REACHING SURFACE IS DIFFUSE RATHER THAN DIRECT. ON NEGATIVE SIDE, SINGAPORE'S SMALL LAND AREA AND FACT THAT MOST HOUSING IS HIGH-RISE APARTMENTS MEAN THAT POTENTIAL SOLAR COLLECTOR AREA IS LIMITED. IN NEAR TERM, SINCE SPACE HEATING UNNECESSARY HERE, MOST PRACTICAL APPLICATION FOR SOLAR ENERGY IS FOR WATER HEATING. WHEN DEMAND FOR AIRCONDITIONING RISES WITH STANDARD OF LIVING, HOWEVER, THERE SHOULD BE POTENTIAL FOR SOLAR AIRCONDITIONING WHEN ECONOMIC AND PRACTICABLE SYSTEM ARE AVAILABLE. IT MAY BE POSSIBLE TO INTEREST GOS FIRST IN SOLAR WATER HEATING AND, PERHAPS ON PILOT BASIS, AIRCONDITIONING. THIS WOULD REQUIRE US ASSISTANCE IN DEVELOPING TECHNOLOGY ADAPTED TO LOCAL CONDITIONS.

D. THERE IS OF COURSE NO USE IN SINGAPORE FOR COAL MINING TECHNOLOGY, AND WE BELIEVE GOS NEEDS LITTLE HELP IN EVALUATING ENERGY SOURCES.

3. ONE POSSIBLE AREA OFR US ASSISTANCE IS IN DEVELOPMENT OF REGIONAL POWER GRID. SINGAPORE AND MALAYSIA ARE ABOUT TO BEGIN DISCUSSIONS ON INTEGRATING THEIR POWER SYSTEMS, FIRST ON FAIRLY LOCAL BASIS (SINGAPORE-JOHORE BARU) BUT LOOKING TOWARD EXTENSION NORTHWARD INTO MALAYSIA. IF US HAS SPECIAL TECHNOLOGY APPLICABLE TO DEVELOPMENT OF SUCH A POWER GRID, THIS WOULD BE GOOD TIME TO PROPOSE MAKING IT AVAILABLE.

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